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Many of the characteristics usually used to describe the Mexican American are basically descriptions of individuals from the lower-lower socio-economic class. A second set of attributes that applies to the majority of Mexican Americans is referred to as "Structural-Demographic." These attributes are related to ethnicity, to regionality, to geography, and to nationality. Characteristics most commonly associated with the Chicano, a term associated with the Mexican American, are that his parents come from Mexico and he speaks Spanish. No single attribute characterizes any large proportion of Mexican Americans, and the many potential differences among Mexican Americans can be depicted on a three-dimensional cube, consisting of belief systems, regional differences, and socioeconomic status. The dominant culture and the Chicanos themselves should recognize the undesirability of stereotyping; this awareness should help to free Chicanos to make socioeconomic gains, to adopt a new way of life, and to participate freely in both cultures. There is a need for additional research into the nature, characteristics, traits, and attributes of the Mexican American. (SW)

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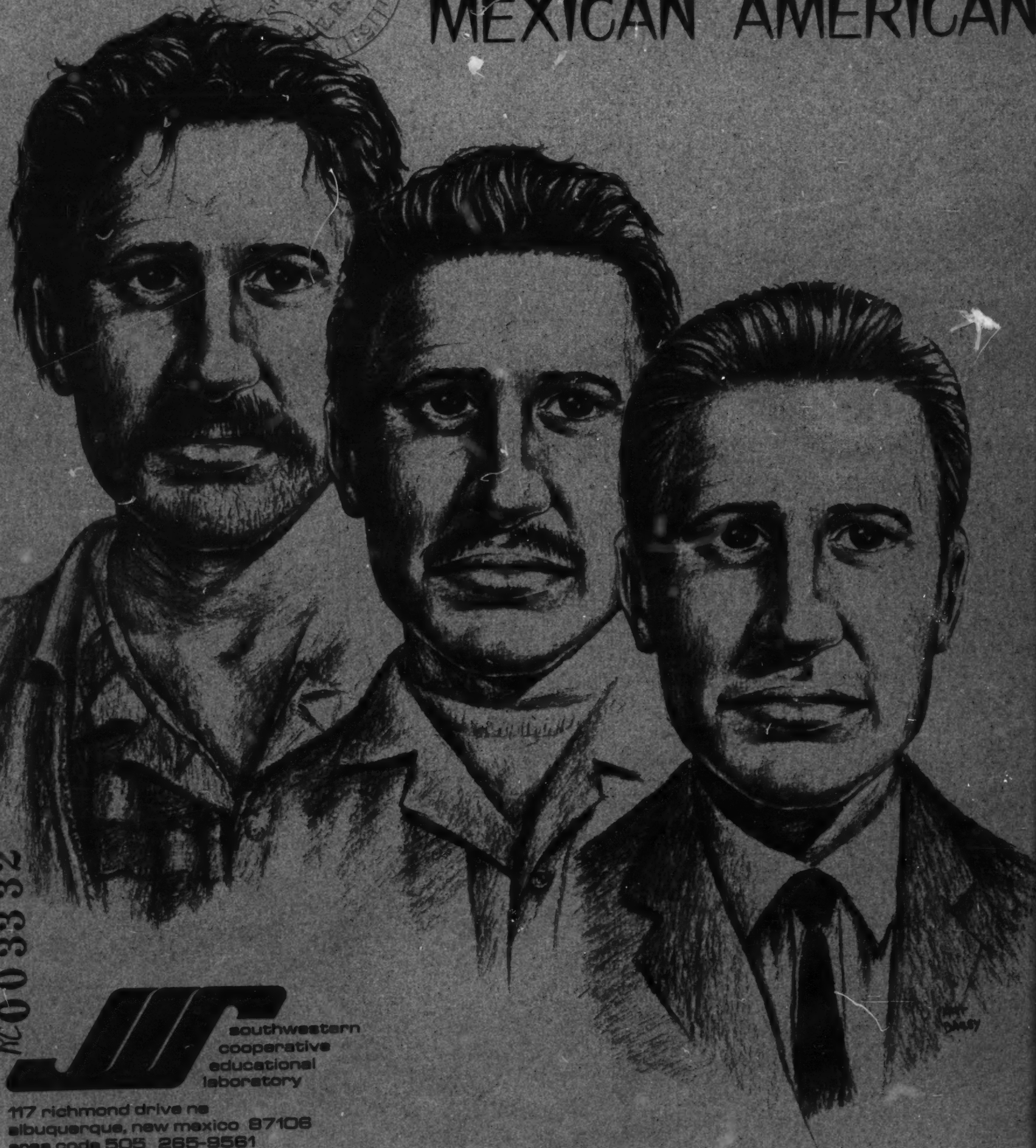

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A NEW LOOK AT THE ATTRIBUTES OF THE MEXICAN AMERICAN

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"Mexican Americans have not been served well by those who purport to interpret them to the larger society. In a sense, they have been the victims of spurious relationships between the scholar, his subject and program builders. Some scholars, blinded by a passionate commitment to methodology or to their own attachments to Mexican Americans fail to see the real strengths and liabilities in the Mexican American community."

Ralph Guzman

A NEW LOOK AT THE ATTRIBUTES OF THE MEXICAN AMERICAN[1,2]

I.

The resurgence in ethnic pride which has come about in recent years can well be said to apply to the Mexican American. No longer need an individual apologetically say that he is Mexican or Mexican American or Spanish American. No longer need he apologize to someone for being a little darker of skin. No longer is a Spanish accent quite as negative or undesirable a characteristic as it was as little as five years ago.

On the other hand, neither can the Mexican American raise his head high and with complete confidence and pride say that he is a Mexican American. Mexican Americans are, despite any growth, still in a limbo because, for many, while they are Americans by citizenship and by residence, they are Mexicans in heritage and tradition.

With this resurgence of what has come to be known as "ethnic pride" there has arisen a concomitant movement to teach Mexican American youngsters -- and perhaps some of their parents -- some of the antecedents of their nationality or ethnicity. We are referring here to knowledge of the Mexican American's history, his Spanish-speaking heritage, and some of the customs of the people from Mexico and perhaps from Spain. But, although there is little opposition to teaching *about* Mexican culture, there is not a great deal of agreement as to what exactly it is that constitutes *being* Mexican American.

One approach to teaching "cultural heritage" is to enumerate the various deeds and achievement of selected Mexican or Hispanic or Latin American individuals. This enumeration would entail a compilation of the significant works of art, of literature, of science, etc., with some emphasis on works by Mexican or Mexican American individuals. The compilation of these would represent the works of the finest *individual* minds in the Latin, Hispanic, or Mexican American world. There is a great deal of merit to this approach, and it is strongly recommended that if this has not already been done, a compilation of such works be accomplished in the near future.

There is a second approach which can be used to describe the Mexican American or the Spanish American person. This is the task of describing the attributes or the characteristics of the people themselves, and not just of the significant figures in the area.

In both the current and in the traditional literature, the Mexican American has been generally characterized by many short-sighted students of culture who have arrived at the "characteristics" or "attributes" of the Mexican American by observing a partial or biased sampling of Mexican Americans. Ironically, these descriptions have been typically fairly good and fairly accurate. They describe the life of, for instance, the Mexican American in southeast Texas[3] vividly and clearly; or they describe the Chicano teen-ager in East Los Angeles[4] vividly and clearly. But, as we shall see, *these studies almost invariably contaminate two extremely important co-existing socio-cultural variables: the effect of socio-economic class on the behavior of the Mexican American, and the effect of ethnicity on the behavior of the Mexican American.*

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1 I am indebted to Atilano Valencis, Felipe Gonzales, Lenin Juarez and Paul Liberty, all of Southwestern Cooperative Educational Laboratory, Albuquerque, with whom I had many long and fruitful discussions relative to the content of this paper. It was these discussions which demonstrated the need for, and led to the writing of, the paper. However, their help in formulating the issues in no way makes them responsible for an conceptual errors which may be found.

2 A condensed version of this paper was presented at the "Regional Conference on Teacher Education for Mexican-Americans," sponsored by U.S. Office of Education in association with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools, held at New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico, February 13-15, 1969.

3 Madsen, William (1964). *The Mexican-Americans of South Texas*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

4 Heller, Celia S. (1966). *Mexican American Youth: Forgotten Youth at the Crossroads*. New York: Random House, 1966.

II.

Recent research -- especially in the last six or seven years -- has documented[5,6,7,8] some of the personality and social characteristics which are attributed to people living in the lower-lower socio-economic class, and which in American society usually includes at least the bottom 15 percent of the population. These sociologic studies in stratification have yielded some very accurate descriptions of the behavior, interaction patterns, attitudes, value systems, interpersonal dynamics, etc., of individuals who live in this stratum of life. Oscar Lewis[9] describes what he calls "The Culture of Poverty" as follows:

> The culture of poverty is not just a matter of deprivation or disorganization, a term signifying the absence of something. It is a culture in the traditional anthropological sense in that it provides human beings [living within it] with a design for living, with a ready-made set of solutions for human problems, and so serves a significant adaptive function. This style of life transcends national boundaries and regional and rural-urban differences within nations. Whenever it occurs, its practicioners exhibit remarkable similarity in the structure of their families, in interpersonal relations, in spending habits, in their value systems, and in their orientation in time.

In what is probably the classic article in the area of the description of characteristics of individuals coming from the lower-lower socio-economic class, Cohen and Hodges describe a study in which lower-lower class behavior patterns were examined and contrasted with middle-class patterns. Their study was done in Central California and included Negroes and Mexican Americans as well as Anglo-Saxons. An analysis of the data showed that *when the attitudes of these lower-lower class Negroes, Anglos, and Mexican Americans were compared, there were no significant differences in their value systems*. Some of the common values Cohen and Hodges found representative of lower-lower class individuals are seen in Table A.

It will be a rare student of culture or of ethnology who will not be struck by the similarity between these characteristics and those usually attributed to the Mexican American. For that matter, they resemble the attributes of other minorities of the U.S.

Today, it is clear that *what many of the sociologic-anthropologic students have done is to accurately depict not the life of the Mexican American, or even of the Mexican, or of the Puerto Rican, etc., but to accurately describe in a confounding manner the characteristics and attributes of individuals living in the Culture of Poverty*! A careful scrutiny of the literature would reveal that indeed "the people of" Cuba (especially before Fidel Castro), Puerto Rico, Mexico itself, Argentina, and India, among others, *would* show similar characteristics. A social scientist born in India and who now works in our Laboratory*, looking at the characteristics described in Table A, remarked that they were a quite accurate description of the lowest social classes in India. These same qualities were attributed to the recently-immigrated Irish of the nineteenth century, most of whom were poor and had little education.

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5 Cohen, A. K. and Hodges, H. M. Jr., "Characteristics of the Lower-Blue-Collar Class." *Social Problems*, Spring 1963, vol. 10, no. 4, pp. 303-334.

6 Riessman, F. *The Culturally Deprived Child*. New York: Harper and Row, 1962.

7 Miller, W. "Lower Class Culture as a Generating Milieu of Gang Delinquency," *Journal of Social Issues*, (1958), vol. 14, no. 3.

8 Irelan, Lola M., Ed. *Low Income Life Styles*. U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Welfare Administration. Division of Research, Aug. 1967.

9 Lewis, O. "The Culture of Poverty," *Scientific American*, Oct. 1966, vol. 215, no. 4, pp. 19-25.

* The Southwestern Cooperative Educational Laboratory (SWCEL) is a private, non-profit research and development facility funded by the U.S. Office of Education, and is aimed at the improvement of early education opportunities for culturally divergent children of the Southwest.

TABLE A

CHARACTEROLOGIC OR INTERPERSONAL STYLES: ATTRIBUTES OF MOST PEOPLE LIVING IN THE CULTURE OF POVERTY

1. Their life within the context of an extended family incorporates a *larger proportion* of available time (than is true of middle and upper class individuals) in interaction with relatives and with other people living nearby.

2. They are non-joiners of voluntary associations, including fraternal, church-related, and political associations.

3. They have a preference for the old and the familiar, demonstrated by a reluctance to engage in new situations, or to form new social relationships, especially to initiate interactions with strangers.

4. They demonstrate a marked anti-intellectualism, which expresses itself in little admiration for intellectuals, professors, writers, artists, the ballet, symphonies, etc., as well as in lack of support for schools or for the school activities of their children.

5. Males demonstrate "Machismo." This is seen as opposite behavior to being intellectual or engaging in such activities as the ballet. Males who demonstrate "Machismo" brag a great deal about their male conquests, and refuse to engage in any behavior which is associated with femininity, such as diaper-changing, dishwashing, cooking, etc.

6. They appear unable to postpone gratification. The tendency to live on a day-to-day basis looms extremely prevalent, and few provisions are made for long-range activities.

7. There is a great deal of use of physical force, for example, to settle arguments, or in the use of physical punishment with disobedient children.

8. They are extremely fatalistic in their view of the world, feeling that they have very little control over nature, over institutions, or over events.

Adapted from: Cohen, Albert K., and Hodges, Harold M., "Characteristics of the Lower-Blue-Collar Class."

While not addressing himself primarily to the distinction between ethnicity and social class, Guzman makes a strikingly similar point[10]

> A romanticized picture of reality has obscured the salient problems of these people. Certain cultural anthropologists, among others, have unduly transmuted aspects of the Mexican-American people into presupposed patterns of behavior. They have swindled the American people into believing that the quixotic and picturesque represent permanent cultural essences. And they have also performed a grave disservice to the government as well as the community of scholars. To establish elaborate exegesis from the fact that some members of this minority group may have a rural sense of time; that some of them may remain dependent upon the local *curandera*; that some males remain obsessed with a notion of *machismo;* and that others have an overriding sense of social fatalism. This is not only disingenuous, it is a cruel hoax. A quest for the quaint is not science (p. 246).

In summary, it can be stated that many of the characteristics usually used to describe the Mexican American -- but not all, for ethnicity still has its impact -- are basically descriptions of individuals from the lower-lower socio-economic class.

However, in one sense, we can say, "And with good reason," for proportionately a very high percentage of the above-mentioned people live in poverty. A recent compilation -- from several *conservative* sources -- reveal that some 16% of the total Caucasian population lives in poverty (that is, has a family income of less than about $3,000 per year); that 27% of the Negro population lives in poverty; that 33% of the Mexican American population lives in poverty; and that 72% of the American Indian population lives in poverty.[11,12,13]

III

There is a second set of attributes that do apply to the majority of Mexican Americans. I call these the "Structural-Demographic." They represent some of the characteristics which are related to ethnicity, to regionality, to geography, and to nationality.

The entries of Table B reflect most of the elements which can more meaningfully be called "Chicano*," especially items 1 through 4. Two items alone, Parents Come From Mexico and Most Speak Spanish, probably account for most of the characteristics we usually associate with the Chicano -- again leaving out the variables associated with low socio-economic class. Almost all the customs Chicanos enjoy -- the mariachi bands and Mexican music in general, the breaking of the pinata at birthday parties, Mexican food, etc. -- are essentially derived from the simple fact that parents or grandparents learned of them in Mexico and brought them to the United States. And, of course, there is the speaking of Spanish which permits the Mexican American two modes of verbal expression, and two conceptual or cognitive modes. Far from being detrimental to each other, the knowledge of two languages, if appropriately taught and reinforced in the youngster, can be of immense value, for they can complement and supplement each other.

On the other hand, there are three characteristics listed in Table B -- items 5, 6 and 7 -- that are totally irrelevant to being Mexican American. No Mexican American *has* to live in California. And, certainly no Mexican American needs to be poorly educated, or needs to be poor. That so many of them are is a sociologic problem which we hope will soon be

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10 Guzman, Ralph. "Ethics in Federally Subsidized Research -- The Case of The Mexican American," in *The Mexican American: A New Focus on Opportunity*. (Testimony presented at the Cabinet Committee Hearings on Mexican American Affairs, El Paso, Oct. 26-28, 1967) Inter-Agency Committee on Mexican American Affairs, Washington, D.C., pp. 245-249.

11 Miller, H. P. (1964) *Rich Man--Poor Man*. Signet books, (Especially Chapters 1 and 6).

12 *1967 Reader's Digest Almanac and Yearbook*, p. 443.

13 Bass, W. P. and Burger, H. (1967) *American Indians and Educational Laboratories*. Southwestern Cooperative Educational Laboratory, Albuquerque, p. 6.

* The word "Chicano" is generally accepted as a Spanish language contraction and nickname for "Mexican" ("Mexicano") or for "Mexican American." Both usages are correct. More recently, the term has come to be associated with the Mexican American of the Southwest, and it is in this latter sense that it will be used here.

TABLE B

STRUCTURAL-DEMOGRAPHIC ATTRIBUTES OF THE MAJORITY OF MEXICAN AMERICANS*

1. The majority have come, or have had parents or grandparents who have come, from Mexico.
2. They speak the Spanish language, and, as a consequence, many have an accent which is a distinguishing feature.
3. They belong to the Roman Catholic Church, and consequently much behavior is aligned with the practice of Catholicism.
4. Many have darker skin coloration, dark hair, and brown eyes, thus creating high visibility.

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5. They live in the five southwestern states of the United States: Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, and California.
6. The educational level, for those over age 25, averages less than eight years.
7. Between 30 and 40 percent of the families earn less than $3,000 per year, thus may be said to be living in the Culture of Poverty.

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* I would like to thank Dr. Thomas Carter, University of Texas at El Paso, for initially calling my attention to this second type of attribute in the Mexican American.

alleviated. But, it is precisely *because* so many Mexican Americans live in the Southwest, and are so poorly educated, and live in the Culture of Poverty, that stereotypes of Mexican Americans arose.

IV.

This essay began by saying that there is a resurgence in ethnic pride. I feel that it helps to know what to be proud about, although this is not absolutely necessary. One can be proud of one's country and not know exactly why. But, if we are to help youngsters to be proud of their Hispanic/Mexican heritage, we are wisest in giving them specific elements about which they can be *legitimately* proud.

How can we ask our children to be proud of being terribly poor? Even if it could be said that some individuals feel proud of being from humble homes, it could not be said that this arises out of the fact that they are Chicano. This would have to be an individual matter, not an ethnic one. Or, one could be proud to be from California or from Texas, but this again would not be tied to being Chicano. These two elements are independent of each other. But, *to speak Spanish well, to enjoy Mexican music and Mexican food, to periodically recall the customs and ways of life of Spain and of Mexico, these are truly Chicano.*

It has now been documented that those characteristics in Table A are essentially attributable to low socio-economic position. Therefore, these characteristics are probably -- if not certainly -- *not* those characteristics which most Mexican Americans would like to see perpetuated as being inherent and intrinsic parts of the Mexican American, Mexican, or Spanish culture or tradition.

We often see the stereotype of the Mexican American, or of the Mexican, as a man sleeping under a big *sombrero*, his back against a sahuaro cactus. Just as we would not want to perpetuate this kind of stereotype, neither do we want to perpetuate other false stereotypes. I submit *that a false stereotype of the Mexican American is represented by a description of the Mexican American as possessing only those attributes accurately associated with the lower-lower socio-economic class.*

A stereotype by the majority culture can become a tremendously damaging element, since the perpetuated stereotype often becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy[14]. There is additionally the danger that the Mexican American himself will come to believe the stereotype, and begin to act the assigned role, thus fulfilling *his* part of the self-fulfilling prophesy. It is easy to see how a potential employer, espousing a vigorous stereotype, might not hire a Mexican American, thus convincing both himself and the Mexican American that the Mexican American was "no good." Similarly, a teacher who believes a Mexican American student to be a poor scholar will soon have the student behaving accordingly.

Guzman[15] has also addressed himself to this issue:

> Tragically, these external social judgments have been internalized by many Mexican Americans. Recent surveys in San Antonio and Los Angeles show a tendency for Mexican Americans to agree with the negative judgments that the larger society passed upon them. Surely it is logically evident that if you treat people for generations as if they were inferior some will begin to believe that they are inferior and act accordingly when they are with you; if you treat people as if they were lazy some of them will respond accordingly to your demands; if you treat people as if they were unintelligent some will respond as if, indeed, they were unintelligent in performing your tasks. What this does to the chances of succeeding generations is not only morally but even criminally wrong; for it is a basic offense against human dignity.

It is also quite possible that some aspects of the lower-lower class stereotypes create in many Mexican American youngsters feelings of embarrassment. It is not difficult to imagine that a youngster might be embarrassed to be a "Mexican American" if that means he must be a *lower-lower class* Mexican American. The converse of this problem is equally a potential problem. Unless Mexican Americans *themselves* come to distinguish clearly between ethnicity and social class, a Mexican American youngster might well be ostracized by some peers when he tries to live the life of a

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14 Rosenthal, R., and Jacobson, Lenore. "Self-Fulfilling Prophesies in the Classroom: Teachers' Expectations as Unintended Determinants of Pupils' Intellectual Competence," in Deutsch, M., Katz, I., and Jensen, A., Eds. *Social Class, Race, and Psychological Development*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, N.Y. 1968. pp. 219-253.

15 Guzman, R. (op cit. p. 246)

middle-class Mexican American. As matters stand now, far too often the feeling is that any Mexican American individual who tries to be middle-class in his style of life is "not a true Chicano." No more proof of the fallacy of this way of thinking is necessary than to point to the fact that in Mexico itself there are many "good Chicanos" who obviously are middle-class. It would be absurd to say that they are "not good Mexicans" because they are not poor! The identical notion applies in the United States. To put it in a nutshell, *being a Mexican American should not necessarily have to mean being a lower-lower socio-economic class Mexican American.*

V

Before we begin making increasingly finer and finer discriminations between various "types" of Chicanos, it is better to, at the outset, say that there is no such thing as *"the* Chicano." More than four million Mexican Americans live in the southwestern part of the United States.*

In exactly the same manner that people *vary within* every other nation of the world, no single attribute characterizes any large proportion of Mexican Americans. In the accompanying diagram (see Table on El Chicano Belief Systems), the many potential differences among Mexican Americans can be clearly seen. Each of the different cubes within the larger cube represents a potential difference between Mexican Americans.

Along the left axis of the cube, along the vertical dimension, we see the very powerful and meaningful dimension we have been calling socio-economic class. At the very bottom of the left axis there is the income level notation for families earning from 0 to $3,000 per year. (The figure of $3,000 has usually been stated by students in the field of economics and sociology as representing the approximate *maximum* income a family can earn and still be found living in the Culture of Poverty.[20])

Also, the low income must have been a *chronic* situation, usually having existed for more than one generation. The chronicity of the poverty is an essential part of the perpetuation of the Culture of Poverty style of life. During the great depression in the U.S. in the 1930's, many people existed on exceedingly small incomes. But, many of the people who were penniless were not uneducated and had never before been penniless. Thus, they had never lived in a poverty situation before; thus, they did not live in a Culture of Poverty. It may even be said that they lived in a "middle-class" culture, even if their income was thoroughly lower class.

There are other examples of groups who earn little money, but who do not live in a Culture of Poverty. Elderly couples, who have most of their goods and homes paid for, may have an income of less than $3,000 and not be in a Culture of Poverty setting. Graduate students in our colleges and universities are notoriously impecunious, but do not live in the

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* It is instructive to evaluate the sheer number of Spanish-speaking Americans living in the U.S. Their number has been variously estimated as between 3,400,000 and 6,000,000.[16,17,18] Including Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and other Spanish-surnamed peoples not living in the five southwestern states, it approximates 6,000,000; those in the five southwestern states total some 4,000,000. These numbers rival the populations of entire nations. Some of the nations whose population approximate the number of Mexican Americans are Denmark, Finland, Norway, Switzerland, and Syria. Mexican Americans outnumber *by a factor of two* the nations of Ireland, Israel, Lebanon and New Zealand. Viewed another way, the Mexican Americans represent one-third of the population of Canada or of South Viet Nam and one sixth the population of Spain. For that matter, this population represents about one-tenth of the population of Mexico itself. In addition, it is larger than the population of some 60 or more of the smaller nations of the world! And, as most people already know, the Mexican American represents the second largest ethnic minority, being "outranked" only by the Negro, who totals about four times the number of Mexican Americans.[19]

16 Sanchez, G. I. "Spanish in the Southwest." Unpublished monograph. p. 1.

17 Marden, C. F. *Minorities in American Society*.. American Book Co. 1952. p. 131.

18 Miller, H. P. *Rich Man--Poor Man*. Signet Book. 1964. p. 124.

19 *1969 Reader's Digest Almanac and Yearbook*. Reader's Digest Association, Pleasantville, N.Y. 1968. pp. 415-603.

20 Miller, H. P. *Rich Man--Poor Man*. Signet Book. 1964. pp. 71-95.

EL CHICANO

BELIEF SYSTEMS

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

RURAL	S.E. TEXAS RURAL	MEXICO MEXICAN
	CALIF. RURAL	MILITANTS
URBAN	HISPANO	
	EL PASO, TUCSON, SAN ANTON. IO, FRESNO	MILITANTS
	LOS ANGELES	

BELIEF SYSTEMS

SOCIO ECONOMIC STATUS	CHURCH	CHILD REARING	MARRIAGE	EDUCATION	HEALTH	FOODS	CLOTHING	POLITICAL	LABOR	ETC.
15,000 +	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10,000 – 15,000	11	12	13	14	15	16	AGE 0- 25- 50 25 50 &	18	19	20
7,500 – 10,000	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
5,000 – 7,500	31	32	GENERATION YEARS IN U.S.A.	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
3,000 – 5,000	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
0–3000 (POVERTY)	51	M F	53	54	INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES	56	57	58	59	60

Culture of Poverty. People who live on farms often grow a large proportion of their food or other necessities, and a cash income of some $3,000 does not dictate their living in a Culture of Poverty. Similarly, in *Everything But Money*, Sam Levenson humorously -- but quite accurately -- describes life in the Jewish ghettos of New York during the 1920's and '30's. He properly attributes the Jew's non-Culture of Poverty style of life to his high esteem for education, for the scholarly, for the arts.[21]

In general, as socio-economic status of an individual rises, we may expect to see concomitant behavior characteristics change. This finding is consistent with almost every study made of social stratification. The amount of money available to a family to a large degree dictates for that family a different style of life. And it may be expected that a different income level will dictate a different style of life, with some national and ethnic modifications, for the Mexican American. And, for the identical reason, we may expect that a different style of life will hold for individuals of varying socio-economic levels in Mexico itself.

The criticism that a given Mexican American individual is not being "a true Mexican" often reflects the critic's stereotyped expectation or appraisal of the individual's tendency *not* to behave in a lower-lower class manner. Should we not ask the critic to compare what he would expect an individual from Mexico, living in Mexico, born and raised in Mexico, to be doing? Consider two white-collar workers, one in Texas and one in Mexico, both bookkeepers, both living essentially a middle-class existence. The one in Mexico would be a "good Mexican," but the one in Texas might not be seen as a "good Chicano."

Clearly, this has to change. *In this way of thinking is found one of the truly significant examples of culture conflict*. While militant -- and other not so militant -- Chicanos are agitating for better jobs (which will mean more economic gain), or for better education (which is the best single way of gaining better employment, and thus a better life), or for better housing, etc., other militants -- and they could be the same militants! -- are asking Chicanos to be "real Chicanos." What exactly is expected of the Chicano?

It is a legitimate question whether these militants are asking other Mexican Americans to behave in an uneducated manner, with a narrow view of the world, to be anti-intellectual, to be fatalistic in their view of the world and their future, to want to stick with the old and the familiar, and, of the males, to continue to demonstrate "Machismo."

VI.

Again looking at El Chicano Belief Systems Table, along the far axis and reaching into the depth of the cube, we see geographic differences. There are two types of "city-bred" Chicanos. The biggest and most obvious group is represented by the more than one million Mexican Americans living in that rough geographic area called East Los Angeles. Other "city Chicanos" may be represented by those who live in relatively large cities such as San Antonio, El Paso, Tucson, Phoenix, San Diego, Fresno, and Albuquerque. These represent a group of "well-cityfied" Chicanos, but not necessarily those associated with the very large urban ghettos. Next come the Hispanos who reside in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado.* The Hispano traces his ancestry to the era of the Conquistadores, who entered this region via the land mass we know today as Mexico, but they passed through there prior to Mexico's becoming an independent nation. As a consequence, they do not see themselves as being *Mexican* Americans, but rather as *Spanish* Americans, because they are descendents from Spaniards. Many of their customs, and even some of their language, reflect this early flavor of Old Spain.

The next categories are those represented by rural Chicanos. Sociology has given us a great deal of documentation[22,23] that individuals living in rural and individuals living in urban settings live a somewhat different style of life and possess different value systems. We should not be surprised, then, to find that

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21 Levenson, Sam. *Everything But Money*. Simon and Shuster, N.Y., 1966.

22 Cuber, J. F. *Sociology: A Synposis of Principles*. Appleton-Century-Crofts, 3rd Ed., 1955. pp. 397-419.

23 Anderson, C. R. "Trends in Rural Sociology," in *Sociology Today*, Edited by Merton, Broom, and Cottrel, Basic Books, N.Y. (1959), pp. 360-375.

* As is made clear in other portions of this paper, the Hispano does not see himself as a Mexican American. This allegiance is acknowledged and the writer apologizes for including them in general discussions when he speaks of the Mexican American or the Chicano. This is done *only* for the sake of brevity.

differences in value systems and mores will differ among Mexican Americans who come from city and from rural settings.

Distinguishing characteristics may also be found, for example, in the two largest groups of rural Chicanos. The first is the Southeast Texas Chicano, and the other is the Chicano who makes his home in the farmlands of rural Southern and Central California. There are at least three reasons why the Chicano from California might differ in nature from the Southeast Texan. First there is simple geographic difference, with different terrain, climate and local conditions; the second is the difference in crops, with attending different harvesting characteristics; and the third is a relative increase in the distance from the heart of the mother country for the California Chicano. At any rate, these are examples of how Chicanos may differ in custom, habit, speech, etc., even though they will always share some similarities.

In order to fill out the box more completely, we have entered the Mexico Mexican. The Mexico Mexican represents that individual who was born in, and lived a significant part of his life, in Mexico before he came to the United States. A large number of these people still maintain their Mexican citizenship, and may be expected to behave in yet another and somewhat different manner. Their upbringing, their training in the Spanish language, their customs, may all be expected to reflect their early Mexico upbringing.

There is yet another group of Chicanos who are not usually counted in the usual treatments of these people, those who reside in sizeable concentrations in some of the larger industrial cities of the Midwest, such as Detroit, Chicago, St. Louis, Lorrajn (Ohio), St. Paul, etc., as well as smaller scatterings in Indiana, Utah, Nevada, etc.

Within many of these groups, especially those of the five main Southwestern states, may be found social, labor or political militants of one persuasion or another. These militants are listed separately, and as representing each of the Mexican American groups at one time or another. The militant element is listed separately because there is danger that a speaker may say that "the Chicanos are agitating" when, in fact, he really means that, for example, *some* Chicanos in the Delano, California, area are agitating, and for union status only, and in a non-violent manner. Or, even if the absolute number of protestors is large, it should be accurately pointed out that even so only *some* Chicanos -- those in the East Los Angeles area -- are protesting about the poor condition of their schools.

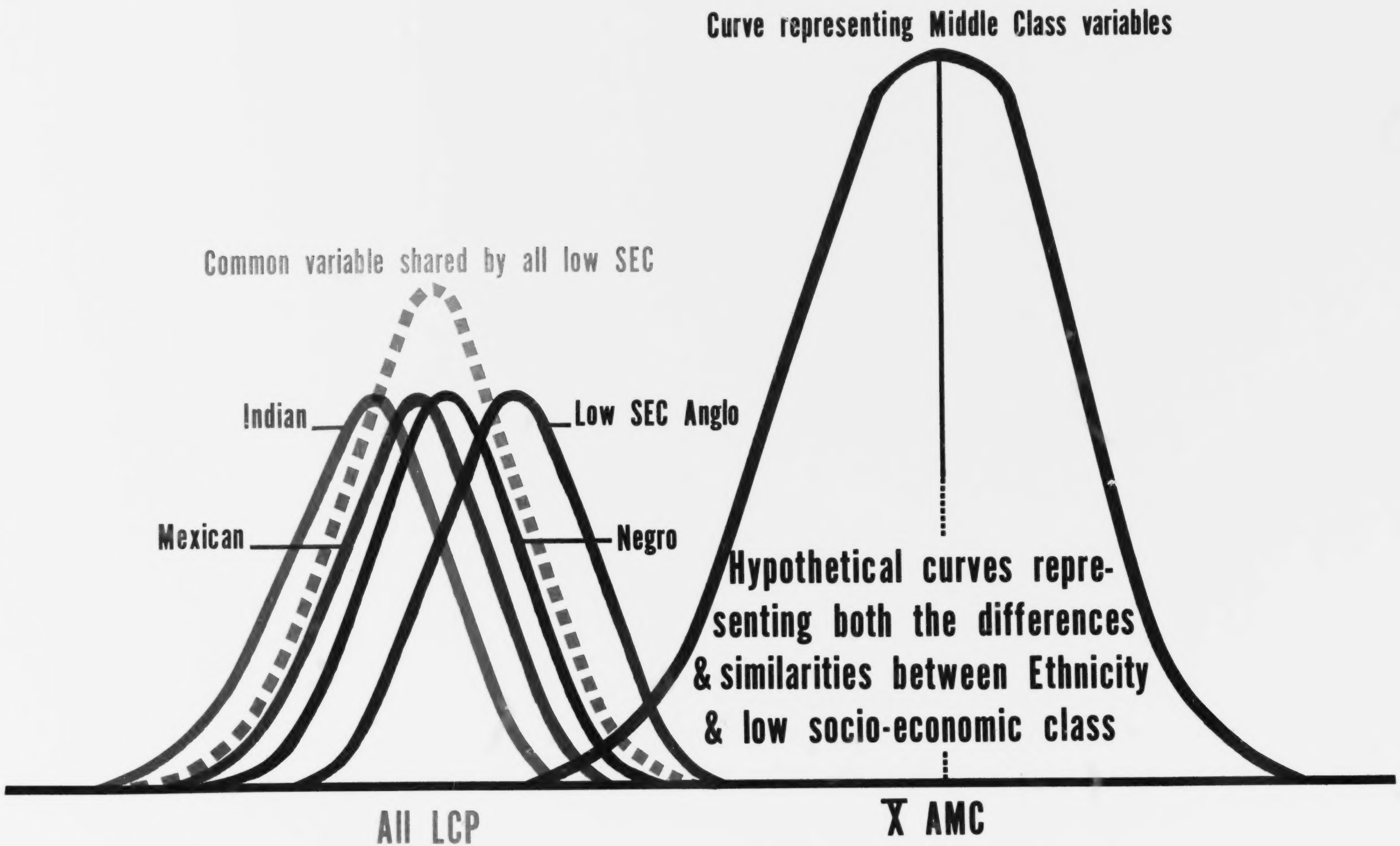
At any rate, the point here is that there is no single unitary quality or behavior that can be completely and totally attributed to Chicanos. Even though most Chicanos share the Spanish language, the Spanish-Mexican ethnicity and cultural values at their core, there are a vast number of differences between them, and these differences (and not only their similarities) must be examined.

This schema for looking at the Chicanos is in no way to be construed as a separatist movement, or as a thrust which should encourage division among Chicanos. It is rather a way of looking at the Chicano in an effort to carefully define the unique problems which confront him. Neither is this an attempt to say that there are no truly ethnic or national characteristics attributable to the Mexican or Mexican American, for surely there are such qualities. It is simply that a comprehensive review of these qualities is outside the scope of the present paper. A graphic representation of the similarities and differences attributable to social class and to ethnicity is presented in Table D. In this graph, the large curve represents the large body of middle class Anglo people of the United States. And the smaller curves represent the various ethnicities, which vary somewhat one from the other, but which share poverty status as a common characteristic more than they share middle class characteristics. The curves do not represent anything in particular, but are merely an abstract and hypothetical representation of any trait being discussed. For example, the large middle class curve might represent values and attitudes toward fatalism. The smaller curves would then represent the lower class' view of fatalism, sharing much of the documented fatalistic notions of loss of control over nature, over institutions, etc., but yet differing somewhat between each other because of characteristic ethnic differences.

VII.

Along the left-to-right axis of the cube are enumerated some of the dominant value systems which almost any culture will possess. Each of these is outlined in gross form on the cube, and it is readily acknowledged that these value systems are not only *not* clear-cut in character, but they have necessary overlap between categories. For example, an entire series of volumes could be -- and has been -- written on the single topic of the education of the Mexican American. The same thing could be said about the topic of the influence of the Catholic church on the life of most Mexican Americans, for it is a well-known fact that the religious ethos has a great impact on the overall cultural life of any people.

It is clear, then, that whenever an individual addresses himself to the question of "*the* Chicano," he is talking in many ways about an abstraction. This is perfectly permissible under many circumstances. A politician or


Curve representing Middle Class variables
Common variable shared by all low SEC
Indian
Low SEC Anglo
Mexican
Negro
Hypothetical curves repre-
senting both the differences
& similarities between Ethnicity
& low socio-economic class
All LCP
X AMC

a reformer, wishing to bring about change, could address himself to "the problems of the Chicano," and he would be understood and be correct, for he would be referring to problems which Chicanos of all persuasions could share. But, aside from obvious gross categorizations which would purposely include all, discussions of problems and of characteristics should *at least* specify the socio-economic class, the geographic area, and the specific values relative to the issue at hand.

The above three-dimensional description does not by any means exhaust all the possibilities unique to describing the Chicano. Three additional dimensions or variables -- applicable to most immigrants -- can easily be defined as follows: First, there is a division into male and female, a division which, at least in folk-science, is especially important to the Chicano who is *supposed* to possess extra doses of "Machismo"; second, Chicanos can be arbitrarily divided into age brackets, such as 0-25 years, 25-50 years, and 50-and older. The third classification relates to the generation (in the United States) of the Chicano. It is clear that, in general, first generation Chicanos will have different mores and customs than individuals who are three generations removed from first arrival in this country. This would be true even if, for example, three males were all living in the East Los Angeles area, were the same age, but were of first, second or third generation. They would exhibit different mores.

Even so, the sub-classification of the Mexican American does not end. Although there are many other variables which could be discerned, there is one which needs special mention. Within any group or sub-group of people there will always be found individual differences. Many times the impression is gained from the socio-cultural literature that, if one would *only* understand the cultural or the ethnic or the social-class characteristics of a people, then one would understand the *individuals within that culture*. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The literature in psychological individual differences[24,25] is filled with examples of the great variability that exists among and between people. And, although fewer in number, there are nevertheless many studies showing individual differences among both ethnic and poverty people[26,27]. There is no reason to believe that individual differences will cease to exist just because the group being investigated happens to be poverty-stricken Mexican American. The possible consequences in education of Mexican American stereotypes, and their interaction with individual differences, is discussed by Guzman:[28]

> Many educators, for example, graciously concede the existence of a representative Mexican American culture. However, in making this concession they seize the opportunity of defining its content. Naturally they also assume the responsibility for fitting every square peg of a Mexican American into the round hole of culture they have invented. There is no one so totalitarian as an educator confronted by a Mexican American child who refuses to conform to the educator's notion of what a Mexican American child should be. Unique individuals are assumed to be non-real, non-legal or possibly non-Mexican.

VIII.

Out of this discussion arises a series of imperatives which Mexican Americans (as well as others interested in the welfare of the Mexican American) must come to recognize. These imperatives necessarily overlap and interrelate with each other.

1. The stereotyping of Mexican Americans must be curbed. This applies not only to the "comic" stereotypes, such as the Mexican sleeping under a big *sombrero*, his back against a cactus, but also -- and more importantly -- to the stereotyping of the Mexican American as coming solely from the lower-lower socio-economic class. Stereotypes beget expectations, and expectations become self-fulfilling prophesies;

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24 Tyler, Leona E. *The Psychology of Human Differences*. Appleton-Century, 1947.

25 Anastasi, Anne. *Differential Psychology*. The MacMillan Co., N.Y. Third Edition, 1958.

26 Klaus, R. A., and Gray, Susan W. "The Early Training Project for Disadvantaged Children: A Report After Five Years." Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development. Serial No. 120, Vol. 33, No. 4, 1968.

27 Rossi, P. H., and Blum, Zavaha D. *Class, Status and Poverty*. National Opinion Research Center, The Johns Hopkins University, Report No. 15, March, 1968.

28 Guzman, Ralph. (op cit. 247)

Some Mexican Americans themselves are equally guilty of stereotyping their own people. That some of these Chicanos have a somewhat different stereotype -- although not always! – of what a Mexican American ought to be does not in any way reduce the undesirability of the stereotype.

2. Chicanos need to feel free to make as much socio-economic gain as their native abilities will allow without having to feel that they should apologize to others for this gain;

3. As each Chicano's socio-economic gain increases, he should feel free to adopt a new way of life commensurate with his newly-found economic gains;

4. The Chicano who has "made good" need not feel that he has to leave behind all that is "Mexican." This paper has argued that there are many customs, music, language and social patterns, foods, etc., which are totally worthwhile -- at any social level -- and thus worth keeping and fostering;

5. The Chicano who has made substantial gain has some responsibility to make some effort in the direction of helping other Chicanos who have not yet been so fortunate. The manner in which each person is to do this should be left to the individual and his conscience, and not be dictated by social pressures, or by political or civil rights action groups who may want to insist he follow in their methods of attack;

6. Chicanos who manage to incorporate some -- or all -- of the above suggestions need feel little or no "separateness" or alienation from either the dominant culture or from the Mexican American culture, for they will be an integral part of both.

IX.

This paper can also serve another important function. I would like to suggest that the notions incorporated in this paper be used as a conceptual model for future research into the nature, characteristics, traits, attitudes, etc., of the Mexican American.

Very often research projects flounder for lack of precision or clear definition of goals. A very simple beginning could be to take, for example, a single cube from Table C and dedicate some research effort toward determining the characteristics or attributes of the Mexican American represented by that *one* cube. A second research project could then take any *other* cube from the model and investigate the parameters of it; and so on. As various individuals or research groups slowly filled in the gaps, a more valid and reliable picture of the Mexican American and his problems and needs would emerge. It follows that from these more accurate descriptions of the problems would emerge increasingly appropriate and worthwhile action programs.

A more modest beginning might be made by utilizing the data already available from previous studies and filling the cubes where these are appropriate.* Doing this would soon reveal where the knowledge gaps exist for future research.

X.

Part of the middle-class ethos is to accept that individuals can rise and become successful. Implied in this is the belief that, given the opportunity, almost anybody can "rise and become successful". And, becoming successful comes about as a consequence of hard work and getting a good education, which eventuates in the young person acquiring his desired vocation. In other words, it is usually felt possible to rise out of a *poverty* status.

On the other hand, it is also recognized that it is impossible for people to change the color of their skins, of their hair, of their features. Another way of saying this can be expressed in something like, "Once a Black, always a Black". However, it is *not* true "Once poor, always poor". And the American Protestant Ethic forcefully pushes in this direction. I believe that some of the extreme resistance to accept or to educate Blacks, or Browns, or Reds, occurs more as a function of *ethnic* prejudice than any other thing. However, if the American public were asked to think *not* in terms of ethnicity -- and all of the "bad" things it is supposed to connote -- but in terms of Poverty, then perhaps *some* of the resistance might become ameliorated.

XI.

Racial prejudice, bigotry and international strife are but outward manifestations of man's basically irrational nature. Thus, the overcoming of these destruc-

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* An example of this would be "Social and Cultural Characteristics of Mexican American Families in South El Paso, Texas" by James G. Anderson and William H. Johnson, Research Center, New Mexico State University, December, 1968.

tive attitudes must necessarily encompass the changing of man at a non-rational level.

However, this is not to say that our plan of attack must also be irrational. A very wise philosopher once told me, "We must always try to carry out our irrational impulses in the most rational manner possible." And, it is in this spirit that I recommend that we proceed to reduce others' irrational attacks on the culturally different, the racially different, and the nationally different, ". . . in the most rational manner possible." After all, our own reasons for our fight are also emotional reasons, those of desiring that poor people, ethnic people, or people who have come from other lands, receive their share of all that is good in our land.

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